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BIDEN AND XI AGREE TO BE A PHONE CALL AWAY IF THERE ARE CONCERNS

In their first face-to-face meet in a year, US Prez Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping agreed to call each other to deal with concerns

MILITARY-TO-MILITARY COMMUNICATION BACK

Both sides agreed to resume military-to-military communications, which until 2020 had been used to improve safety in the air and on the sea. China had severed military-to-military communications last year after then US House speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan. At the meet, Xi pitched for reducing tensions on Taiwan and easing crippling US sanctions

DICTATOR JIBE AGAINST CHINESE STRONGMAN

- The two leaders met on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco. Biden said he believes China will not interfere in the upcoming Presidential elections in Taiwan
- "Well, look, he is (a dictator)," Biden said later. "He's a dictator in the sense that he is a guy who runs a communist country," he said **PTI**

TWO

AGREEMENTS SIGNED TO REDUCE RISKS OF SHIPS, AIRCRAFT IN THE PACIFIC

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

GREEN LIGHT

UGC to offer 1-yr PG programme, freedom to pick subject of choice

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

ONE-year master's programme, flexibility for students to switch from one discipline to another, and the freedom to choose alternative modes of learning from offline, online, and hybrid options are some of the key features of the draft post-graduate curriculum and credit framework approved by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in its November 3 meeting.

"This framework allows students to do their master's in any stream they choose as a major or minor in their undergraduate programme," UGC chairman Prof M Jagadesh Kumar told this newspaper. "In addition, they can also pursue a master's degree in a discipline unconnected with their UG specialisations, provided the student demonstrates competence by qualifying in an entrance test like CUET-PG," he added.

For the first time, UGC will offer a one-year PG course. The existing two-year PG programme will have an exit option after one year; students who opt to exit will get a PG diploma.

The draft framework enables students who have completed a four-year UG, three-year UG plus two-year PG, or a five-year integrated programme in STEM subjects to enrol for ME and M Tech in allied areas, Kumar said. "This multidisciplinary education fosters a well-rounded understanding of the world and encourages critical thinking and problem-solving skills," he added.

As per the draft policy, undergraduate students can opt for a double major or opt for any of the two subjects they have majored in. It also allows students who qualify UG with a major and minor(s) to opt for either a major or minor(s) subject in the master's programme.

As per the draft policy, higher education institutes will have the flexibility to have different designs of master's programmes – one-year, two-year, and an integrated five-year course.

Guv returns pending bills, TN govt calls special session to readopt them

Ravi acts after SC flags serious concern; guv "shall not withhold assent" if bills passed for 2nd time

T MURUGANANDHAM @ Chennai

MINUTES after news emerged on Thursday that Governor RN Ravi has returned a set of bills that were pending with him for his assent to the Tamil Nadu Assembly, Speaker M Appavu said a special session of the Assembly has been convened on Saturday (November 18) to readopt the bills. As per the Constitution, when the Assembly passes a bill for the second time, the governor "shall not withhold his assent".

Sources said the Tamil Nadu Assembly may pass the bills without any change for the second time at the special session.

The development comes days after the Supreme Court expressed "serious concern" over inordinate delay by the governor in giving assent to the bills passed by the state legislature. A three-judge bench headed by the Chief Justice of India, D Y Chandrachud, made the observation while hearing a petition filed by the TN government asking the top court to fix a timeline for the governor to decide on bills.

Raj Bhavan and state law department sources are silent on the number of bills returned and whether the governor has made any recommendation regarding the bills for the reconsideration of the Tamil Nadu House.

As per the petition filed by the Tamil Nadu government before the Supreme Court, 12 bills were pending with Governor RN Ravi for his assent.

Of them, eight bills pertain to powers of the state government in appointing vice-chancellors to various state universities, two bills are on Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University Act and inclusion of finance secretary as a member in the syndicate of all universities (except University of Madras, Mother Teresa Women's University and Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University) and the other two are bills passed by the previous AIADMK regime. Sources said the governor may have reserved two bills for the consideration of the President and sent 10 bills back to the Assembly for reconsideration.

Assembly session on November 18, no clarity on bills

As per the petition filed by TN before the Supreme Court, 12 bills were pending with Governor RN Ravi for his assent. Eight of them pertain to powers of the state to appoint V-Cs to universities. Sources said the governor may have reserved two bills for consideration of President

A video grab of a jack and push earth auger machine inserting a steel pipe into the rubble of the under-construction tunnel | EXPRESS

Pipe insertion into tunnel rubble on, new drill machine raises hopes

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

A heavy-duty drilling machine flown in by the IAF is functioning well at the cave in site of an under-construction tunnel in Uttarkashi where 40 labourers have been stranded on the other side of the rubble since Sunday.

Uttarkashi Superintendent of Police Arpan Yaduvanshi told this newspaper that two steel pipes — each 6 metres long — have been inserted into the debris to rescue the labourers. That insertion took seven hours.

A third pipe has now been welded to the second one and is being pushed in through the US-made jack and push earth auger machine. More than 12 metres of the pipe has been inserted so far. "Drilling is going on continuously," the Uttarkashi SP said.

The length of the debris heap was earlier estimated at 30 metres. It could actually be double that figure. Col Deepak Patil, in charge of the relief and rescue mission, said: "The trapped labourers are estimated to be 60 metres away from where drilling started. When our Plan A with an old auger machine failed, we went for Plan B, which was using the US-made auger. Plan C is also ready," he said.

Once the pipe reaches the other side where the labourers are trapped, it will be illuminated inside with an LED rope light.

The NDRF rehearsed evacuation drills and modified their stretchers into movable trolleys using used vehicles bearings, two stretchers in tandem.

The collapse happened at the Silkyara side of the tunnel that will terminate at Dandalgaon when the project is fully executed. It's on the Yamunotri National Highway.

The operation is being remotely monitored by tunnel experts through live video to check and understand the trend and behaviour of the rocks.

"Two persons have been given the responsibility for this work. They are running the video cameras round the clock," said a worker associated with the company.

EXPRESS READ

Govt mulls selling land to revive PRR project

Bengaluru: The state government is considering selling all its lands along the Peripheral Ring Road (PRR) to private firms to raise funds for reviving the 16-year-old pending project. The government has started the process of surveying land it owns around the PRR and in the city that can be sold.

India for lawful commerce in int'l waters: Rajnath

New Delhi: India is committed to freedom of navigation, overflight and unimpeded lawful commerce in international waters in accordance with global norms, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said at a meeting of 10-nation ASEAN and some of its dialogue partners in Jakarta on Thursday.

Polls in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh today

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh will vote on Friday to decide the electoral fate of 2,533 candidates in 230 assembly seats. Besides, the final phase of polling in Chhattisgarh's 70 assembly segments will be held and the electoral fate of 958 candidates will be decided by ₹1.63 crore voters.

daCunha/AB/913

It's India vs Australia in ODI World Cup final

FIROZ MIRZA @ Kolkata

SO, India play Australia in the final on Sunday. The second ODI World Cup semifinal script, however, had its moments. The overcast evening sky brought drizzle, breeze, and swing in the middle. Eden Gardens was draped in its finery as South Africa took the first step, electing to bat under overcast conditions against pace-laden Australia.

Four wickets in the first powerplay was enough to push South Africa on the backfoot. But the ball was not the only thing that swung; even the fortunes of both the teams. If the ball swung in the first hour, it spun in the later hours. Chasing 213, the contest turned out to be gripping, like Tabraiz Shamsi's leg-breaks, as Aussies walked across the finish line with just three wickets to spare in front of 45,000 strong spectators. The loss, like before, will hurt Temba Bavuma and Co for a long time. However, nothing worked for them as they lost wickets in heaps with only David Miller (101 off 116) and Heinrich Klaasen (47 off 48) managing to play out Aussie quicks and spinners. In the end, the target of 213, coincidentally the same total as set by Australia in the 1999 semifinal, did not prove enough as Australia stormed into their eighth final, where formidable India await in Ahmedabad. **P17**

Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins celebrate the victory against SA | PTI

A STATE GOVT INITIATIVE

K'TAKA TO HAVE SHEEP & GOAT MEAT OUTLETS ON THE LINES OF KMF

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka government is planning to sell packaged sheep and goat meat at reasonable prices through its outlets across the state on the lines of Nandini milk products of the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF).

This move, under the Animal Husbandry Department, is expected to generate employment in rural areas.

In a statement, Congress MLC TB Jayachandra, who is also the special representative of the state government in New Delhi, said work on a hi-tech slaughterhouse is nearing completion at Cheelanahalli in Sira taluk of Tumakuru district.

The slaughterhouse, which is being constructed in association with a private agency, is expected to be inaugurated by January, he said. Elaborating on the project, Jayachandra said this initiative is aimed at helping farmers to get good prices for their sheep and goats and providing quality meat to people. Under the project, animals will be purchased directly from farmers. This will help improve their income. The department will strive to create a meat brand like KMF's Nandini.

"We want sheep and goat farmers to get remunerative prices for their animals. We want to strengthen the financial status of these farmers. This entire exercise will generate more jobs in rural areas," he said.

The government also has plans to make products out of sheep and goat skin. "Officials from the department will be sent to Ambur in Tamil Nadu and Kolkata to study leather and other products being made there using sheep and goat skin," he said.

Jayachandra held a meeting of officials on the project at Vidhana Soudha.

Murugha seer released after 14 months in jail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chitradurga

Murugha Mutt pontiff **Dr Shivamurthy Murugha Sharanaru**, who was arrested in two POCSO cases, was released on Thursday after 14 months in jail.

The High Court of Karnataka granted him bail in one case. Second Additional District and Sessions Court Judge BK Komala on Wednesday issued an order directing the Chitradurga district prison authorities to release Dr Shivamurthy Sharanaru. But he was not released on Wednesday as the court order did not reach the jail officials on time.

The pontiff was received by a large number of devotees outside the district prison on Old Bengaluru Road. He left for Shivayogashrama Virakta Mutt at Davanagere, where he will stay till the completion of the court cases. **P5**

Yathindra's video kicks up political storm, Oppn bays for CM's blood

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru/Mysuru

A video clip of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son and former Congress MLA Yathindra Siddaramaiah discussing with his father over the phone about "giving only four-five" (presumed to be transfer of government officials) has kicked up a political storm in the state.

Opposition JDS and BJP termed Yathindra a "shadow CM" and slammed the Congress government for rampant corruption in transfers. The video has led to calls from the opposition demanding Siddaramaiah's resignation, despite his refutation. Yathindra has come under criticism after a leaked video clip featured him calling his father CM Siddaramaiah asking him to "consider names given by him".

This has given enough reason for former CM and JDS leader HD Kumaraswamy to level corruption charges at Siddaramaiah, insisting that the conversation in the video clip was about "transfer business". The video shows Yathindra mentioning a name "Vivekananda" and instructing in Kannada "only to consider 4-5 names given by him". **P4**

SPACE DEBRIS REDUCTION

Upper stage of Chandrayaan-3 launcher returns to earth

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

INDIA on Wednesday sealed its commitment to reducing space debris while aligning with guidelines of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC). The cryogenic upper stage of LVM3 M4, which launched Chandrayaan-3 on July 14, made a pre-planned re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere, removing itself from being in orbit as part of space debris around the Earth.

The re-entry event occurred at 14:42 IST on Wednesday and the probable impact point was predicted over the North Pacific Ocean, Isro scientists said, adding that the final ground track did not pass over India.

This part of the rocket was

an integral component of the LVM3 M4 launch vehicle which released the propulsion module that made its way to the Moon before releasing lander Vikram — carrying the rover Pragyaan inside it — which gave India its first lunar touchdown on August 23.

"This rocket body (NORAD id 57321) was part of the vehicle that successfully injected the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft (propulsion module) into the intended (Earth) orbit of 133 km x 35823 km with a 21.3o inclination on July 14, 2023," said Isro in a statement.

Isro said, "The re-entry of the rocket body took place within 124 days of its launch. The post-mission orbital lifetime of the LVM3 M4 Cryogenic upper stage is, thus, fully compliant with the "25-year rule" for LEO (Low Earth Orbit) objects as recommended by IADC."

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